

Local businesses to benefit from increased tourism and events

Report says NY will see more than \$283 million in wedding revenue and tourism

Huntington, NY – On Friday, Rep. Steve Israel (D – Huntington) joined Moke McGowan, President of the Long Island Convention & Visitors Bureau, and David Kilmnick, CEO of the Long Island GLBT Services Network at Oheka Castle to announce a joint effort to explore opportunities to promote Long Island as a wedding destination for same-sex couples.

“I am proud to be a New Yorker for marriage equality,” said Rep. Israel. “Now that we’ve achieved this historic victory, it’s time for the next step – weddings. New York is expected to see hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue from same-sex weddings and tourism. Long Island has some of the best venues, beaches and transportation in New York and we’re ready to compete for that business.”

“We are excited and thrilled to be working with Congressman Steve Israel and partnering with the LI Convention and Visitors Bureau in bringing same-sex couples to the most beautiful place in all of New York State to celebrate their love. With our beautiful beaches on both shores and top notch catering facilities, Long Island will be the gay wedding destination for same-sex couples. Through the newly launched www.longislandgayweddings.org website everyone will be able to find and select Long Island’s premiere wedding vendors and be able to do so with a social conscience as well,” Kilmnick said.

“When you combine Long Island’s stellar reputation as a wedding destination with its history of graciously welcoming visitors from the GLBT community, I believe we now have a great opportunity to benefit our tourism economy as a wedding destination for same-sex couples,” said McGowan. “We’re looking forward to working with the Long Island GLBT Services Network to identify how we can develop a mutually supportive partnership in this endeavor.”

Rep. Israel connected the Visitors Bureau and Long Island GLBT Services Network in an effort to ensure Long Island businesses benefit from the tourism and increase in events resulting from the new same-sex marriage law. The groups are planning to work together on promoting Long Island and the Long Island GLBT Services Network has already launched a website to help same-sex couples plan their wedding.

A report from the New York State Senate's Independent Democratic Conference estimates that that same-sex marriages will result in \$283,810,725 in wedding and tourism revenue, \$22,704,858 in sales tax and \$3,792,400 in marriage license fees. The report estimates that 21,309 New York same-sex couples would marry and additional same-sex couples would travel from out-of-state, resulting in an estimate 66,524 same-sex marriages in New York.

Rep. Israel has also introduced legislation to protect same-sex couples from discrimination in credit transactions. The Freedom from Discrimination in Credit Act of 2011 (H.R. 1488) amends the Equal Credit Opportunity Act to prohibit discrimination on account of sexual orientation or gender identity when extending credit. The legislation has 56 cosponsors in the House of Representatives.